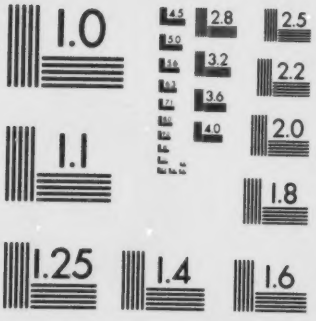

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ABSTRACT

Based on a model developed by Brown and Levinson (1978), this thesis examines one feature underlying appropriate language use--politeness--as it affects the discourse of native English speakers in three situations. The three situations and speakers involved are: (1) British speakers in a British public library, (2) American speakers in an American public library, and (3) American speakers at mealtime in the home. Cross-culturally the analysis reveals that speakers in the British library employ politeness strategies similar to those employed by speakers in the American library. Intraculturally the analysis reveals that speakers in the home employ different politeness strategies than those employed by speakers in the American library. It is suggested that Brown and Levinson's model can be used as a taxonomy for discourse analysis. It provides ESL teacher and researcher a framework in which to realize and discuss differences between cultures and languages in terms of politeness and its effect on linguistic outputs. (Author)

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POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH DISCOURSE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
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Chairman

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ABSTRACT

Based on a model developed by Brown and Levinson (1978), this thesis examines one feature underlying appropriate language use--politeness--as it affects the discourse of native English speakers in three situations. The three situations and speakers involved are:

1) British speakers in a British public library.
2) American speakers in an American public library.
3) American speakers at mealtime in the home.

Cross-culturally the analysis reveals that speakers in the British library employ politeness strategies similar to those employed by speakers in the American library.

Intraculturally the analysis reveals that speakers in the home employ different politeness strategies than employed by speakers in the American library.

This thesis suggests Brown and Levinson's model as a useful taxonomy for discourse analysis, giving the ESL teacher and researcher a framework in which to realize and discuss differences between cultures and languages in terms of politeness and its effect on linguistic outputs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Politeness plays a part in our everyday conversations as we attempt to express our feelings and desires without offending the listener. We use a variety of strategies in our efforts to be polite, ranging from the use of words like "please" and "thank you" to phenomena such as hesitations, circumlocution, joking, pretending agreement, slang, exaggeration, and so on.

Brown and Levinson (1978) suggest that a speaker uses positive politeness when trying to be friendly and express solidarity with the hearer. For example, a positive politeness request might be:

"Hey, gotta sec to talk with me?"

Negative politeness, on the other hand, is used if a speaker wishes to express deference, formality, and social distancing. For example:

"I'm really sorry to bother you, sir, but I was wondering if I could disturb you for a minute?"

According to Brown and Levinson (B & L), the choice of positive or negative politeness strategies is influenced by three factors. These are:

1) The social power that the hearer (H) has over the speaker (S)--we are more likely to use negative politeness with the president of our company than with our equals or subordinates.

2) The social distance between S and H--we are more inclined to use negative politeness with strangers than with friends and family.
3) Level of imposition the utterance carries--to ask for the time generally is no threat to S or H whereas to ask for $10,000 may well be very threatening.

Though B & L argue that these factors influence the choice of politeness strategies by speakers in all languages and cultures, this does not necessarily result in the same linguistic realizations. In other words, cultures differ in their choice of politeness strategies depending on how they interpret the power, the social distance, and the degree of imposition in the utterance.

This thesis will examine three situations and the use of positive and negative politeness strategies by the participants. The three situations and speakers involved are:

1) British speakers in a British public library
2) American speakers in an American public library
3) American family members at mealtime at home

Assuming that the British interpret the factors of power, social distance, and degree of imposition differently than do Americans, I hypothesize that:

1) British speakers will use more negative politeness strategies than American speakers will in conversations recorded in a public setting, namely, a public library. Conversely, Americans will use more positive politeness strategies than British speakers will in this same setting.

In addition, assuming that Americans in the home interpret the factors of power, social distance, and degree

of imposition differently than do Americans in the library, I hypothesize that:

2) The generally accepted principle that speakers interact less formally in their homes than in public settings will be reflected by a greater use of positive politeness strategies by Americans in the home setting than by Americans interacting in the library setting.

There are a number of reasons for formulating these particular hypotheses. These reasons will become clear as I review the literature which includes writings on social interaction, face, communicative competence, speech act theory, politeness, and finally, B & L's model.

Relevance to ESL

Assuming that all languages have devices to indicate politeness, the non-native speaker must learn how the culture of the target language manipulates these devices. What is viewed as a polite linguistic output in one culture may be viewed as less polite or even rude in another due to the way that culture employs politeness strategies. If the non-native speaker transfers his culture's strategies of politeness to the target language, he might use strategies that result in an inappropriate output in the target language.

House and Kasper (1979:31), examining errors made by German speakers learning English, note:

> Now, in order to avoid the type of pragmatic errors that...native speakers of German make when learning or speaking English, it seems to be most important to include the pragmatic aspects of language use in language teaching, one of them being the interpretation and use of politeness in utterances. It seems also to be advisable for the teacher to explicitly point out to the learner that politeness markers are an integral part of the foreign cultural system, and should neither be used nor interpreted by reference to the learner's native system.

The ESL teacher is faced with the task of teaching the learner rules of appropriate use in addition to grammatical rules of English. Stratton (1977:135), in her critique of the communicative syllabus, has noted the deficiency of our present state of knowledge about rules of use: "Regarding speech acts alone, the most serious deficiency is the incompleteness of the description of speaking rules." The more we, as ESL teachers, are aware of how politeness affects the native speaker's use of English, the better equipped we are to explain these aspects to the non-native speaker of English.

Review of the literature

People bring to a conversation more than just their linguistic knowledge. Each person has attitudes about the other person and his role in the conversation, the importance of the task at hand, and probably ideas of how to obtain what he wants from the interaction.

It appears part of the nature of the social system to establish a balance of give-and-take within a group.

Both the speaker and the hearer accept that there are benefits in preserving the overall structure of the group. At the same time, though, there are benefits in exploiting other individuals in the group. This leads to a dichotomy between wanting to maintain group cohesiveness and wanting to achieve one's own goals at the expense of exploiting another member. Thus, the speaker must carefully weigh his words and use them in a way that does not antagonize the other individual, but still leads towards the speaker achieving his goals.

The fact that social interaction does not digress to utter chaos in this social context where relationships are often ambiguous, everchanging, and there is a constant give-and-take at work, suggests that there is a certain degree of logic governing the interaction. N.K. Humphrey (1976:312) proposes that:

> ...in a social interaction, there are, if not strict rules, at least definite constraints on what is allowed and definite conventions about how a particular action by one of the transactors should be answered by the other.

These implicit constraints may differ from group to group but tend to be shared by members within one group. The members utilize this knowledge in order to achieve their individual goals. Goodenough (1965) argues that a speaker decides how he wants to present himself according to what he wants to accomplish in the interaction. Thus, the

interaction influences not only his identity, but that of the social relationship.

Face

Humphrey also suggests that one of the factors influencing a conversation is the fact that the interactants are basically selfish. However, Humphrey claims that this selfishness is tempered by sympathy, that is, "the tendency on the part of the speaker or hearer to identify himself with the other and so make the other's goals to some extent his own" (p. 313).

Goffman (1967) sees what Humphrey calls sympathy as an element of "face." Face is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself" (p. 1), that is, the public self-image one wishes to portray. Goffman views the maintanence of face "as a necessary condition of the interaction, though not the goal" (p. 12). With respect to saving face, he states that "the person will have two points of view--a defensive orientation toward saving his own face and a protective orientation toward saving the other's face" (p. 14).

In addition, the attitude towards the face of the speaker and hearer is influenced by the rules of the group and the definition of the situation as it affects face.

> Each person, subculture, and society seems to have its own characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices. It is to this repertoire that people

> partly refer when they ask what a person or culture is "really" like. And yet the particular set of practices stressed by particular persons or groups seems to be drawn from a single logically coherent framework of possible practices. It is as if face, by its very nature, can be saved only in a certain number of ways, and as if each social grouping must make its selections from this single matrix of possibilities. (Goffman, 1967:13).

Not only must a person be aware of another's interpretation of his own face-saving practices, but he must be aware of the repertoire of face-saving practices of his particular culture or subculture.

It appears that the need to incorporate face-saving strategies is a universal to all societies and directly affects how people communicate. According to B & L, certain speech acts are inherently face-threatening in all cultures although there may be considerable cross-cultural variations in the relative level of threat of a particular act. For example, in all cultures, making a request of a superior may be face-threatening, though to a greater degree in some cultures than in others. In no culture would it be more face-threatening to make the same request of a subordinate.

Communicative competence

Clearly, language used in a social context requires more on the part of the interactants than just a knowledge of the grammatical rules of the language. They must be aware of the sociocultural and psychological constraints on the interaction.

Linguists for many years have studied grammatical rules, including the study of morphology, syntax, and semantics. Chomsky (1965) made a distinction between a speaker's linguistic competence, that is, his ability to understand and produce an infinite number of grammatically well-formed sentences, and his linguistic performance, his actual use of language regardless of its grammaticality. This distinction, however, does not account for the sociocultural aspects of a speaker's competence.

Hymes (1972) introduced the concept of communicative competence which includes "in addition to grammatical knowledge, social knowledge, which acts as a constraint on the communicative process and which shapes the way messages are realized in actual social interaction" (p. 6).

Hymes suggests that there are several aspects of the outside world that affect language use. These include components such as the topic, the channel of communication, the participants, the setting, and the goals of the interaction. Based on this variety of cues, a speaker decides which social norms apply to a particular situation and selects communicative strategies compatible with these norms--"rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 1971).

Ervin-Tripp (1976), in her examination of directives, also suggests that a speaker selects the form of the

utterance based on an evaluation of social features. She includes the features of territoriality, physical distance, difficulty of the task, and whether the task is a normal part of the hearer's duties. The speaker and hearer must share the same evaluation of these social features in order to avoid misunderstanding. For example, if the speaker uses a more polite form of a directive than is normal for that particular setting, social relationship, etc., the hearer must recognize this and attempt to identify the social implications of its use. In the following examples, the first utterance is between compatible roommates, the second between incompatible ones:

You make a fine door, Sal. (i.e. let me through)

Excuse me, please.

The second example, though on the surface more polite than the first, suggests the incompatibility between the speaker and the hearer because this degree of formality is not generally expected between college-age roommates. Ervin-Tripp suggests that if politeness had only a dimension in meaning and not in context, there would be no such thing as being too polite. "It is because the deviance from a norm is given a social interpretation that ingratiation can be as insulting as deviance through rudeness " (Ervin-Tripp, 1976:64). Further, she maintains that social norms of distribution must be learned by exposure.

Grice (1975), in discussing how the speaker and hearer are able to understand one another, introduced the principle of cooperative behavior which assumes that the speaker and hearer are following what Grice calls conversational maxims. These maxims are:

Maxim of Quantity:	Be as informative as necessary.
Maxim of Quality:	Be truthful.
Maxim of Relation:	Be relevant.
Maxim of Manner:	Avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Be brief and orderly.

Grice maintains that these maxims are basic, common assumptions underlying all conversations and enable the speaker and hearer to understand one another. However, he does not claim that speakers always follow the maxims. It is, though, the speaker's knowledge of the maxims that enables him to make conversational inferences that depend on noticing that maxims have been broken and that one needs to search for a motivation to explain the deviation.

Finally, Searle (1976) suggests that the speaker and hearer are able to communicate by relying on a shared body of both linguistic and non-linguistic information. In addition, the interactants assume that one another is rational and capable of making inferences.

Speech acts

Speech act theory has also played an important role in the examination of how people communicate with one another. According to Austin (1962) speaking is not just

the expression of a proposition, but is a way of "doing things with words."

Austin proposed that speech acts have both referential meaning and performative functions. Referential, or locutionary meaning, refers to the truth value of an utterance. For example, in the act of making a statement, what is stated is the referential meaning. The act of stating itself is the performative, or illocutionary, function--it is a commitment to the truth of the statement. In other words, the utterance "It is raining outside" has the referential meaning that it either is or is not raining outside. This utterance, though, may have one of a variety of performative functions, having to do with the intentions and consequences of the act of saying something.

An utterance may intend to influence the hearer in a way that is aimed at achieving such consequences as a reply, attention, cooperation, annoyance, or any of a number of possible responses from the hearer. This intended consequence of an utterance is its illocutionary force. The same utterance may one time have the illocutionary force of a question, another time a command, and another time a request.

To account for this lack of a one-to-one fit between the forms of utterances and their illocutionary force, researchers have examined not only the syntactic rules

that govern referential meaning, but have looked for rules governing social interaction. These rules would help to account for the variations between form and function as used in different cultures. This approach also enables researchers to isolate such factors as the role of politeness in verbal interaction among various cultures.

Politeness

As argued by B & L, politeness strategies are employed in all societies when an utterance threatens to damage the face of the speaker or hearer. It is the function of the politeness strategies to maintain face by minimizing the threatening act in some way.

B & L claim that politeness strategies are based on universal principles, these principles being:

1) The universality of face, described as two kinds of wants--positive and negative.
2) The potential universality of rational action for the purpose of satisfying others' face wants.
3) The universality of the mutual knowledge between interactants of (1) and (2).

However, they believe that the "application of the principles differs systematically across cultures and within cultures across subcultures, categories, and groups" (p. 288).

Searle (1976) maintains that politeness is a primary motivation for the use of indirect speech acts (any utterance in which the illocutionary force is masked or not overtly marked), claiming that there are conversational

requirements that make it awkward to utter a direct imperative or explicit performative.

R. Lakoff (1974) views rules of politeness as being at the very basis of human interaction. She suggests that the following are rules of politeness that function in association with Grice's conversational maxims:

1) Formality: Keep aloof.
2) Deference: Give options
3) Camaraderie: Show sympathy.

Lakoff maintains that these rules of politeness have priority over Grice's rules of conversation to the extent that the rules of politeness will usually be adhered to before the rules of conversation: "...it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity" (1973:297). In addition, Lakoff suggests that while rules of politeness may be applied differently in different cultures, their basic form is universal.

House and Kasper (1979) examined politeness markers in British English and German, viewing politeness as:

> ...a social value that occurs in all civilized societies, even though the social norms relating to what is and is not considered polite behaviour may vary across cultures. (p. 1)

In their study, they focused on the pragmatic errors made by German students of English. They undertook the study in an effort to determine whether the errors were due to a speaker's lack of knowledge of the proper English forms or if there were different social norms at work in

the two cultures, resulting in different linguistic behavior of a culture's speakers in terms of politeness.

House and Kasper concluded that by British norms, the German speaker of English indeed seemed impolite. However, looking at the behavior within the system of each culture, they suggest that the differences may merely be a reflection of a different organization of each cultural system, placing different values on different levels of politeness. As Lakoff has expressed it: "It isn't that cultures are different; it's that they express similar feelings in different ways" (1975:318).

House and Kasper view both the defensive and protective functions of face-saving discussed by Goffman as being served by politeness. This view is discussed in great detail by Brown and Levinson and shall be the focus of the remainder of this review of the literature.

Brown and Levinson

1) Politeness strategies

As mentioned previously, B & L maintain that most speech acts are threatening to the preservation of the speaker (S) or hearer (H). They argue that a speaker computes the degree of face-threat present in any speech act by weighing the factors of social distance between S and H, the degree of power of one over the other, and the degree to which that particular act is threatening in

that particular culture. Based on this evaluation, the speaker then selects a strategy for doing the act in such as way as to minimize the face-threat of the act.

To achieve this minimization, the speaker may decide to remain silent rather than to do an extremely threatening act, so as not to take the risk of greatly damaging his or H's face. If the speech act is only minimally threatening, if S has great power over H, or is S and H tacitly agree to dispense with concern for face in light of the need to be efficient, then S may decide to do the act baldly and directly. This is described as doing the act on-record, without redressive action. S is following Grice's maxims of conversation, achieving maximally efficient communication at the expense of attention to face. Examples of the use of on-record strategies include utterances such as: "Help!"; "Bring me the wine, butler."; "Come in."

If neither of these extremes--remaining silent or expressing oneself baldly--is employed, a speaker may choose to go on-record, with redressive action. This involves using strategies of positive or negative politeness.

In choosing a positive politeness (PP) strategy, S reassures H that he is valued by S and that they share a common ground with the minimum of social distance. Examples of PP strategies include using first names or nicknames, trying to show agreement with H even if one does not really

agree, joking, and expressing optimism. For example, a speaker might make a PP request by expressing optimism that the request will be granted--"I've come to borrow a cup of flour."

If S selects a negative politeness (NP) strategy, he attempts to reassure H that S does not want to infringe on H's freedom of action. NP strategies are elaborate, conventionalized, and formal, while PP strategies are friendly, familiar, and casual. NP strategies include conventional indirectness, hedging on illocutionary force, being pessimistic, showing deference, being apologetic, and expressing indebtedness. An example of an NP request might be that of apologizing--"I'm sure you must be very busy and I'm awfully sorry to bother you, but could I maybe borrow a cup of flour?"

A final category of strategies is that of going off-record, which involves violating one or more of Grice's maxims. In breaking one of the maxims, a speaker gives himself an "out," allowing the utterance to be interpreted in more than one way. Off-record strategies include being vague or ambiguous, hinting, being ironic, presupposing, overstating, and understating. An example of an off-record utterance might be: "I wonder if I have enough flour for these cookies?", said while eyeing H's grocery bag with a sack of flour in it.

2) Ethos

This thesis examines two varieties of English--British English and American English--in light of B & L's theory of politeness strategies and their influence on speech acts. As previously stated, I hypothesize that Americans will make use of different politeness strategies than those used by the British in a similar situation. Also, Americans speaking in the library will use different politeness strategies than will American speakers in the home setting. These differences in the use of strategies arise out of differences in what B & L call 'ethos'. As they state:

> Every observer in a foreign land knows that societies, or subcultures within societies, differ in terms of what might be called 'ethos', the affective quality of interaction characteristic of members of a society..,in some societies interactional ethos is generally warm, easy-going, friendly; in others it is stiff, formal, deferential... (p. 248).

According to B & L, it is possible to generalize about the overall flavor of interaction or ethos of a society based on the culture-specific dimensions of social relationships as assessed by distance (D) and power (P). It is the assessment of D and P that determine the degree of threat inherent in the act, this in turn regulating the choice of politeness strategies used. Thus, in addition to universals accounted for in the theory, there are also culture-specific variations that are accounted for.

Accounting for the cross-cultural variations involves assessing the seriousness of a face-threatening act based on the following formula:

$W_X = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_X$

where

W_X= the weightiness of the act

D(S,H)= social distance between S and H

P(H,S)= power that H has over S

R_X= the degree to which the act is rated an imposition in that culture

Brown and Levinson outline the following five points as sources of cross-cultural variations:

1) The general level of W_X in a culture, as determined by the sum of P, D, and R values.

> In positive-politeness cultures the general level of W_X tends to remain low; impositions are thought of as small, social distance as no insuperable boundary to easy-going interaction, and relative power as never very great. These are the friendly back-slapping cultures, as in the western U.S.A....In contrast, the negative-politeness cultures are those lands of stand-offish creatures like the British (in the eyes of the Americans)....This distinction between positive- and negative-politeness emphases not only marks class in hierarchical societies, but also marks different kinds of social roles from one another (p. 250).

2) The extent to which all acts are face-threatening, and the particular kinds of acts that are threatening in a culture

> In England and the U.S.A....offers are not very threatening FTAs, but in Japan

> an offer as small as a glass of ice-water can occasion a tremendous debt... compliments may be very big FTAs in societies where envy is very strong... and criticisms may be very big FTAs in 'shame' cultures....There are likely to be cultural constraints on certain outputs of the politeness strategies as a result of the treatment of some classes of acts as especially severe FTAs....In English, for example, conventionalized indirect requests are so common that it is rare to hear a completely direct request even between equals... (p. 252).

3) The varying importances attached to P, D, and R

> In India, for example, the D variable seems to be less important (to have lower average values) than the P variable; in the U.S.A., on the other hand, P is perhaps normally insignificant relative to D. Furthermore, cultures may differ in the degree to which wants other than face wants (such as the want for efficiency, or for the expression of power) are allowed to supersede face wants (p. 254).

4) The different ways in which positive-face wants are distributed over an ego's social network

> ...in some cultures (or subcultures) there is a dramatic distinction between those whom you really want to be similar to...and those whom you wish to value some special trait or ability that you possess, but nothing more. In India this division would be along family and caste lines....In Western cultures we get a more even spread of positive-face wants across persons... (p. 254).

5) The nature and distribution of strategies over the most prominent social dyadic relations in a particular society

> ...in societies where the majority of public relations are dominated by

> high P relations (e.g. India) we would expect...bald on record (and perhaps positive politeness) going down to inferiors, and negative politeness and indirectness going up to superiors....In societies where high D relations dominate in public encounters (of which Japan by all accounts is one...England to a lesser degree yet another), one would expect symmetrical use of high-numbered strategies to be most evident. In societies where low D is the emphasis and P is minimized (as perhaps in western U.S.A.), symmetrical use of bald on record and positive politeness would be expected (p. 256).

In summing up their model, B & L state:

> It is along these lines, then, that we hope to be able to use our model of the universals in linguistic politeness to characterize the cross-cultural differences in ethos, the general tone of social interaction in different societies. This framework puts into perspective the ways in which societies are not the same interactionally, and the innumberable possibilities for cross-cultural misunderstanding that arise (p. 258).

Following B & L's suggestion that the British have a different ethos than the Americans, I assume that this leads to an assessment of P, D, and R on a higher scale by the British than by the Americans. This higher assessment calls for a greater use of negative politeness strategies by the British. Likewise, I assume that the Americans assess P, D, and R on a lower scale than the British, resulting in a greater use of positive politeness strategies.

Based on these assumptions, I hypothesize that the British will use more negative politeness strategies than

American speakers will in conversations in the public library and that Americans will use more positive politeness strategies than the British will in this same setting.

In addition to these cross-cultural differences in ethos that result in a different use of politeness strategies in each country, I also assume that there are intracultural differences in the use of politeness strategies in conversations in the library among strangers compared with the strategies used at home among family members. Again, this difference is due to a difference in the assessment of the variables of P, D, and R.

In the home there is relatively little distance between members, the power of any family member over any other is minimal, and there are no very face-threatening acts involved in these particular conversations. On the other hand, in the library the librarian has the power to grant or refuse the patron's requests, there is a social distance between the librarian and patron as strangers and as members of different social roles, and some acts not normally in the line of the librarian's duties are more threatening than others.

Thus, I hypothesize that in the home setting, due to a difference in the assessment of the three variables, there will be a greater use of positive politeness strategies than used in the library setting. In order to

examine this hypothesis, I will be comparing the library data from the United States with the home data from the United States.

CHAPTER II

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The data for this study was collected by tape recording conversations in public libraries and in the home during the summer of 1979. The public libraries are located in Worcester, England and Modesto, California. The home setting is located in Turlock, California.

Worcester (pop. 73,445:1971 census), the county seat of Worcestershire, is located on the Severn River approximately 120 miles northwest of London. It is an old town, dating back to 680. The central architectural structure in the town is the fourteenth-century cathedral which dominates the skyscape. Long-established industries include the making of porcelain, gloves, and sauce. The library is located in the downtown area about five blocks from the cathedral. It is the central branch of the Hereford and Worcester County library system.

Modesto, the county seat for Stanislaus County, has a population of 61,712 (1970 census). It is located on the Tuolumne River in a farming and fruit-growing area of the San Joaquin valley about eighty miles south of Sacramento. Its industries include some of the largest canneries and wineries in the world. In contrast to Worcester, the Modesto downtown center is no longer the central shopping

area, due to the new shopping mall at the edge of town. As with many cities in the United States, its growth has been that of urban sprawl rather than the concentrated growth of Worcester. The library is located approximately ten blocks from the downtown area and is the central library for Stanislaus County.

In addition to the library settings, recordings were made of conversations between family members at mealtime in an American home. This home is located outside of Modesto about fifteen miles, in the town of Turlock (pop. 13,992:1970 census). Also a farming area, this town's main industries include canneries and poultry-processing plants.

Subjects. The subjects recorded in the library settings were the patrons having business to transact at the enquiries or information desk. The patrons ranged in age from school children to older adults. The librarians ranged in age from approximately 25 to 40 years of age. Both men and women were recorded.

In the home, the subjects included the father (D), the mother (M), and three children and their partners, all in their twenties--a son (R) and his fiancee (W), a daughter (C) and her husband (J), and the youngest son (T) and his wife (A). J, a Briton living in the United States for the past fifteen years, spoke very seldom so it is felt

that his presence had little adverse influence on the results of the home data analysis.

Method of recording. The librarians in both libraries felt it imperative that the patrons be informed that they were being recorded. In Modesto, this was done by placing a sign at the desk that said "We're recording today." In England, however, there was a strong belief that no one ever reads signs and so patrons could not be considered properly informed unless they were vocally informed. Thus, I was required to ask each patron for his permission to record his conversation. I generally phrased my question as "Would you mind if I recorded your conversation for an American linguistic study?". I believe that this questioning did not greatly affect the linguistic output of the patron, for the patrons quickly got involved with the task at hand. In one instance, having begun to record before getting a patron's permission, I interrupted him and asked for his permission. He gave it to me and proceeded to begin his conversation again, using exactly the same wording that he had used before he knew he was being recorded. Also, it was obvious from conversations with the patrons concerning my study that most assumed I was studying accents. Thus, if they changed any part of their speech, it was likely to be accent, as this is what they thought I was examining.

No one refused to be recorded in either setting. I stood near the patron as though I was the next in line, my

tape recorder in my purse and the microphone held inconspicuously in my hand.

In the home, the recording took place at the dinner table. The tape recorder was set on the floor and the microphone was placed on the table in as unobserved a spot as possible or placed in my shirt pocket.

Following the data collection, the tapes were transcribed, ignoring such details as short pauses and intonation.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In constrast to Alice's croquet game with the Queen of Hearts, where no one followed rules, everyone played out of turn, and real confusion ensued, this analysis assumes that in social interaction, the participants follow a generally agreed upon, unwritten code of what to expect and accept linguistically. An aspect of communication that influences this unwritten code is the need to achieve one's goals without damaging the face of either party. This results in the use of positive- and negative-politeness strategies.

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this analysis is to examine the politeness strategies used by individuals in their social encounters. I will compare the strategies used by British speakers in Great Britain (GB) and American speakers in the United States (US) in conversations in the public library. In addition, I will compare the strategies used by American speakers during dinner at home (H) with those strategies used in the library situation. I will discuss all three situations simultaneously, focusing primarily on GB-US and US-H data comparisons.

Organization of the data

The data is organized in terms of turns. Goffman (1964:135) notes that:

> Card games, ball-room couplings, surgical teams in operation, and fist fights provide examples of encounters; all illustrate the social organization of shared current orientation, and all involve an organized interplay of acts of some kind. I want to suggest that when speaking occurs it does so within this kind of social arrangement; of course what is organized therein is not plays or steps or procedures or blows, but turns at talking.

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974:700) suggest that "turn-taking seems a basic form of organization for conversation" and I have therefore selected turns as my basic unit of organization.

From the data, I selected as close to an equal number of turns for each situation without breaking off a conversation in mid-stream. The examples below illustrate the method of counting turns:

1st turn: Patron (P) I need a new card after September, so should I get it now?
2nd turn: Librarian (L) Yes, I can update it for you. I will need to call the Hughson library and update their records. I hope they're open today.
3rd turn: P Sometimes they're not.

Each change of speaker is counted as a turn regardless of the number of utterances spoken within a turn. In the case of two people speaking as the same time, two turns are counted:

1st turn: P [Thanks.
2nd turn: L [There's no fine.]

In each situation, approximately 1000 turns were recorded and transcribed. Of each 1000 turns, 230 were selected to be analyzed in detail, focusing on the use of positive politeness (PP) and negative politeness (NP) strategies.

The 230 turns from each library include 100 turns concerned with a particular speech event--obtaining or renewing a library card. This speech event occurs fairly often in both libraries and appears to be governed by a common set of rules. These rules refer not only to rules set by the library, but to unwritten conversational rules about the process of asking for and obtaining a card. In other words, it is generally accepted that one begins the process by stating one's desire, such as "I'd like to join the library" and not "My phone number is _____." The statement of desire may be preceded by the librarian's query "May I help you?" or a greeting "Good morning." This lets the patron know that it is his turn to speak.

The following conversation from the US data is an example of a normal exchange of turns for this speech event:

P I was wondering if I could join the library?
L Can you show me some ID with your name and address on it?
P Yes.
L OK.
P Here's my driver's license.
L OK, would it be, have you had a card before?
P No.
L Here or at any of the branches?
P No.

L Would anyone at your address have a card?
P No.
L (typing up a card) Do you live in the county year-round?
P Uh, huh.
L Do you attend school?
P No.
L I need your home phone, please.
P 5346743.
L And your social security number.
P 507957483
L If you'll check that over and sign the bottom, please. OK, you can check out one book on this card today. You'll be getting your regular card in the mail sometime this week.
P OK.
L This card will be waiting for you at the checkstand behind you. If you just put your book on the end of the counter and give the clerk your name, they'll check it for you.
P OK.

A similar structure is seen in a conversation from the GB data:

P I'd like to join the library.
L Yes, do you have any identity on you? Something with your name on it? (P hands L such) Thank you. Have you ever joined the library before?
P Sorry?
L Anywhere before in the county?
P No.
L No. Would you like to fill that in? (an application form)
P (fills in and returns to L)
L You can reserve up to six books on your ticket and they're issued up to a month at a time.
P Is that it?
L Yeah.
P Thank you very much.

In both examples, there is a similar conversational structure. P states what it is he wants, L obtains information pertinent to the satisfying of these wants, either by asking questions or giving P a card to fill out and sign, and the conversation ends with L explaining details

about checking out books. The conversation generally closes with "OK" or "thank you." Variations of the exchange include rejecting P's wants on the premise that he does not have the mandatory identification.

In addition to these conversations, additional conversations were selected at random to total 230 turns, this number of turns also being randomly chosen. All of the conversations followed the general pattern of: (Greeting)* + P states need + L asks questions relating to satisfaction of needs + (conversation relating to but not necessary for satisfaction of needs) + L satisfying or giving reasons why needs cannot be satisfied + acceptance of satisfaction or explanation + closing.

Conversations in the home followed a much less rigid and predictable pattern. During the course of the meal, a variety of topics were introduced and it seemed that anyone could comment on the topics. Conversations usually centered around food and events recalled by the discussion of the food. An example of the progression from food talk to other talk is seen in the example below:

R Well, I thought you should all know the ice cream's getting harder and harder, so just take your time.
C Mmmmmm.
D Alright.
M OK.
C So you just used the electric one, huh?
R Yeah.

---

*Parentheses represent optional use.

C Is that quite a deal now, that, [once...]
W [No.]
R I'm not sold on it quite yet.
C Except that you can make ice cream in the middle of winter.
W It just is a whole new set of problems, you know, well, the old crank-type [freezer...
R [You had to find someone to do the work.
W It was the same old problem, you had to find somebody to work it. Well, this one, you get it packed too full and it stops so you got to pull all the ice out [and...
R [You can't drive the motor with it.
C Oh.
R With the beater.
C So does that, I mean, does that make a lot of problems, do you have to do that a lot, I mean, take the ice out?
W Well, we did today.
C Oh.

In these conversations, people seem free to interrupt one another more often than in the library. Also, more utterances are incomplete, relying on the hearer's ability to interpret the utterance. This is plainly demonstrated in the following:

J Somebody did that, they sent back a hundred and seventy-four dollar bottle of wine.
T What!?
M Is that what, if you say you don't like it, do they take it back?
J Yeah.
W No, it's just that, it's just that...
R A new bottle, a new bottle,
J Yeah, a new bottle.
W It's just to see if it's sour or something, I mean, you know...
R Yeah, cuz wine gets sour.
T Well, [would people...
M [Oh.
R It works fine, but that's why you check a bottle of wine before you drink it.
T Oh.
C And then does he continue to fill the fellow's up or

does he fill up the woman's?
J But you don't do that with the house wine.
W No.
J I don't know what he does, he fills up mine.
W If you order the house wine, you don't have the steward to open it.

This conversation assumes a certain amount of understanding of unspoken and incomplete comments and an ability to follow unconnected utterances.

In addition to general conversational topics open to everyone, there are some strictly two-party interactions such as the following:

A Dad, do you want milk or lemonade?
D Uh, do you have lemonade made?
A Yeah.
D Alright, let's have some.

Two-party conversations rarely lasted longer than the above example.

In the libraries, the topics of conversation concerned the problem at hand and generally did not deviate to anything not directly concerned with the library functions. In the home, topics changed a number of times. If there was a pause in the conversation and no further comments were made about the current topic, a speaker appeared free to select his own topic, as in the following example:

D Mom and I will rent it for you on your twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.
C On our twenty-fifth? OK.
J Sounds like a bargain.
(Pause)
R Well, I thought you should all know the ice cream's getting harder and harder, so just take your time.

It should be recognized that though selection of politeness strategies is discussed as though the speaker consciously calculates the situation and then chooses a strategy, in reality this selection takes place so rapidly that one must quickly make decisions as to what to say and how to say it and usually does not have time to consciously assess the situation.

An amazing amount of information is collected and stored in the course of one's interaction with another. One might later be able to recall the title of a book on the shelf, the time on the clock on the wall, and other such information without ever intentionally noticing and remembering these things. In the same manner, one notices aspects of the situation, interactant, the task at hand, and other related matters and makes adjustments in his speech during the course of the conversation. Selections of PP and NP strategies are part of this subconscious adjustment that one makes during social interaction.

Due to difficulties (to be discussed in Chapter IV) encountered in using B & L's model to classify utterances in terms of politeness strategies, it was not possible to categorize every utterance. In addition to those utterances that I was unable to classify, I made no tabulation of on-record and off-record utterances, as the focus of this thesis is on PP and NP strategies. For these reasons,

though 230 turns were examined for each situation, the statistical results do not add up to 230.

The data analysis revealed the following overall results:

Table 1*

Distribution of politeness strategies among subsections of the corpus

	GB	US	H
PP	53%(85)	49%(75)	88%(133)
NP	47%(74)	51%(78)	12%(19)
Total	100%(159)	100%(153)	100%(152)

*Percentage figures represent the use of PP or NP out of the total number of strategies identified in that situation.

These results suggest that GB and US do not vary to any great extent in the use of positive and negative politeness strategies. The home data, on the other hand, suggests a much greater use of PP than in the GB or US data and conversely, a much smaller use of NP than in either of the other data samples.

With these overall results in mind, discussion now turns to the individual features and strategies of positive and negative politeness as they occurred in the three situations.

Positive politeness

To briefly define once again, PP strategies are oriented towards the positive face of the hearer--his basic desire that others think of his wants as desirable. PP strategies are used in an attempt to satisfy one's need for approval and to express a sharing of wants and knowledge. Though S may not in reality want H's wants, S at least expresses the idea that he wants H's wants to be satisfied; that H's positive face be maintained.

In the examination of GB, US, and H data, there are a number of PP features and strategies noted. Among the most frequently used strategies are: 1) using in-group language, such as nicknames, slang, and ellipses; 2) seeking agreement; 3) avoiding disagreement; 4) making offers and promises; 5) expressing optimism; 6) noticing H, his needs and goods; 7) presupposing common ground; and 8) including both S and H in the particular activity.

1) In-group language. This strategy is used more often than any other strategy of PP. There are several features of PP found within this strategy. The most common feature in the H data is the use of first names, nicknames, and terms of endearment.

H-1) W Dad, did you want a little wine?

H-2) M Honey, that's your seat.

In the GB and US data the patron most likely does not know the librarian's name, so of course cannot use it. However, one patron did use a term of endearment:

GB-1) P Can I join the library, please, luv?

In contrast to the patron, the librarian often knows the patron's name, since the patron has to fill out forms that include his name or has to show a library card with his name on it. There is one case of the librarian translating this written information into verbal use. A patron forgot to sign his card and as a way of getting the patron's attention to come back and sign it, the librarian spoke in a loud voice:

US-1) L Oh, wait, Tom? You want to sign the application, please?

Other than this case of necessity in attracting the patron's attention, librarians did not refer to their patrons by name. That is not to say that it cannot happen but rather that it is not highly practiced. Perhaps L considers it to be overstepping his rights to use the name of P, which P has been forced to give as part of library procedure. This may be especially true since P has not received the reciprocal information, that is, L's name. As seen in Table 2, there is certainly no restriction of the use of names in the home data:

Table 2*

Address terms

GB	US	H
9%(2)	7%(2)	43%(25)

*Percentages represent the number of turns using this particular feature out of the total number of turns in each situation using the strategy of in-group language.

Another feature of in-group language is the use of slang. Slang carries with it a degree of informality and assumes a shared terminology between S and H. Examples from the data include:

H-3) C Is that quite a deal now?

US-2) L OK, fix ya right up.

GB-2) P We're going to go to town (put on a big production).

There is a greater use of slang in the H data than in either library situation:

Table 3

Slang

GB	US	H
26%(6)	14%(4)	19%(11)

A final feature of in-group language is the use of ellipses, utterances missing either a subject or a verb and whose comprehensibility is possible due to shared knowledge on the part of S and H.

H-4) T A little bit?

GB-3) L Two books.

US-3) P Sometimes they're not.

Ellipses often occur in answers to questions, the questions themselves often being ellipses.

US-4) L Your birthdate?
P Eight twenty-two sixty-six.

Ellipses are used most often in the US data, least in the GB data.

Table 4

Ellipses

GB	US	H
61%(14)	79%(23)	38%(22)

The total number of occurrences of in-group language is seen in the following table:

Table 5

Total in-group language

GB	US	H
27%(23)	39%(29)	44%(58)

2) Seeking agreement. Another strategy directed at claiming common ground between S and H is the attempt to claim or show agreement. One way to do this is by repeating part or all of what is said by the previous speaker. This implies that one is listening, understanding,

and interested in what the other is saying. For example:

GB-4) L English forests?
P English forests, yes.

US-5) P Two days.
L Two days, OK.

H-5) R A new bottle, a new bottle.
J Yeah, a new bottle.

Distribution of this feature is seen in the next table:

Table 6

Repetition

GB	US	H
16%(14)	12%(9)	8%(10)

Another feature of this strategy of seeking agreement is to discuss topics that S and H know they agree on or that pose no real threat of disagreement, such as talking about the weather.

A very distinct difference between the H data and the GB and US data is in the number and variety of topics discussed. In the GB and US data, conversations generally deal with the task at hand such as enrolling in the library. In the H data, however, conversations deal not only with information exchanges such as deciding who is sitting where and who wants the salad passed but also with general conversation topics, such as ice cream machines, wines, school children, and packing to move. For example:

H-6) T Boy, you can see everybody good from the end (of the table).
M That's why the father always sits down there... so he can keep an eye on everything.
J He just needs a little whip and that's...
R He just needs a little electric chair...
M I have wished I have had that at school.
C What's that?
M Some kind of wiring system to all of the kids' desks...and when I'm having to work with the reading group and somebody way over in the far corner is doing something he shouldn't, then I could just push a little button...

In general, the use of safe topics seems to be as an aspect of normal conversation more than as a preamble to a face-threatening act. B & L discuss safe topics as leading up to the face-threatening act while in the data here, there is no face-threatening act being led up to. Because of this, the feature of safe topics was not counted. Had it been, the H data would have shown an overwhelming use of safe topics, followed by the US and then the GB data which showed no use of this feature.

3) Avoid disagreement. A speaker may try to avoid disagreement with H by giving the appearance of agreeing or by hedging his own opinions if they differ from H's. Rather than saying "no" to a request to "come here," one might say "I can't come right now," even if one has no intention of complying with the request. One might also hedge, as seen in the next example:

GB-5) L You know, I think we'll sell a lot.
L_2 Yes, probably.

The appearance of agreeing when really disagreeing is seen in the following example:

H-7) T If you went like this, like that, there'd be a whole lot less...
C Yeah, but it doesn't pick up.

This strategy of avoiding disagreement is used more often in the GB data than in the US data, chiefly as a hedging of opinion. It appears that in the US data, S is not as hesitant to commit himself to some opinion or to disagree if necessary.

Table 7

Avoid disagreement

GB	US	H
13%(11)	23%(2)	11%(14)

4) Make offers and promises. By making an offer or promise, S is recognizing H's wants and expressing cooperation in obtaining these wants for H. Offers and promises occur often in the H data, less often in the GB and US data. Offers include offers of food, promises of a future holiday, and promises of cooperation.

H-8) A Well, I'll sit there...or if you want, I'll sit over there.

GB-6) L Anyway, just in case it's a false start, I'm going to give you two of them.

US-6) L Here, try this.

Table 8

Offers, promises

GB	US	H
5%(4)	8%(6)	17%(22)

5) Be optimistic. This strategy involves expressing optimism that H wants S's wants for S or for S and H. Rather than asking that a want be satisfied, S states the want in a way that assumes that H wants S to achieve this want.

GB-7) P I'll just leave those (books) there for a minute.

H-9) A Well, I might as well let you guys go ahead (and eat).

In GB-7, P assumes that L approves of P putting the books on the counter, just as in H-9, A assumes that everyone wants to go ahead just as she wants them to.

Table 9

Be optimistic

GB	US	H
12%(10)	7%(5)	3%(4)

6) Express interest in H's wants and goods. This strategy pays attention to H's positive face by taking notice of his goods and desires. The most common means in the data of noticing H is by complimenting.

H-10) J I still think this is such a neat cup.

H-11) C They look nice, Roger.

This strategy is used much more in the H data, S complimenting food, material goods, or accomplishments. In the GB and US data, there is little occasion to give compliments. The only use in GB is a librarian's repeated comment of "Oh, how lovely" to a patron's description of a playhouse he was helping to open.

Table 10

Express interest by complimenting

GB	US	H
2%(2)	----	10%(13)

7) Include both S and H in the activity. This strategy is usually accomplished by using some form of "we" when one really means "you" or "me." The use of "we" assumes or hopes for a degree of cooperation between S and H. Examples include:

H-12) C We probably could use a glass of water (meaning "I").

US-7) P Uh, let's see (meaning "me").

The use of the inclusive "we" does not appear at all in the GB data.

Table 11

Inclusive "we"

GB	US	H
----	3%(2)	5%(6)

In summary, positive politeness strategies are distributed across the GB, US, and H data as seen in Table 12:

Table 12

Distribution of positive politeness strategies across subsections of the corpus

GB	US	H
53%(85)	49%(75)	88%(133)

The much higher number of PP strategies in the H data is due in large part to the use of in-group language, particularly the use of familiar address terms. The H data also showed the greatest use of the strategies of expressing interest, making offers and promises, and including both S and H in the activity, resulting in a greater use of PP strategies than used in the GB and US data. This is in agreement with the hypothesis that American speakers in the home would use more PP strategies than would speakers in the library situation.

Comparing the GB and US data, there is not the expected difference in the amount of PP strategies employed by either group. Possible reasons contributing to these results shall be discussed later. Looking at the individual strategies, some differences in distribution are seen. In the GB data, there is a greater use of the strategies of being optimistic and avoiding disagreement than used in the US data. The remainder of the strategies are fairly evenly distributed.

Negative politeness

Negative politeness strategies are used by S in an attempt to redress H's negative face--his desire that his freedom of action be unhindered. NP is the politeness of formality, deference, and social distancing. The most common strategies of NP employed in this corpus are: 1) conventional indirectness; 2) hedging; 3) apologizing; 4) stating the face-threat as a general rule or obligation; and 5) minimizing the imposition of the act.

1) Conventional indirectness. As alluded to previously, this strategy poses many problems in classification. Conventional indirectness consists primarily of indirect speech acts, those acts which say one thing and mean another. Indirect speech acts result from an utterance having performative as well as referential functions (see p. 10). Some indirect speech acts are more indirect than others. For example, these utterances are listed from most indirect to least indirect:

GB-1) P I joined before but I lost my ticket ages ago.

US-1) P I was wondering if I could join the library.

GB-2) P I'd like to join the library, please.

US-2) P I need a library card, please.

A speaker may want to be very direct in order to make sure he is understood. On the other hand, he may not want to be too forceful or come on too strongly, so will use a

form of conventional indirectness. Rather than saying "Give me the salt," he will say "Can you pass the salt, please?". Though the second example is ostensibly asking a question about H's abilities, if H responds with "yes" but does not pass the salt, S is likely to assume that H is being difficult, uncooperative, or humorous.

Of the different types of indirect speech acts used in the data, the statement or question of desire using the word "like" or "need" was used most often.

Table 13

"like" & "need"

	GB	US
"Would you like...?" "I'd like..."	88%(14)	14%(2)
"You'll need..." "I need..."	12%(2)	86%(12)

These included utterances such as:

US-3) L I'll need you to fill that out, please.

GB-3) L Would you like to fill that in?

Ervin-Tripp (1976), in her analysis of American directives, categorized six forms of directives. She named one of these forms as Need Statements. She defined these as occurring between persons differing in rank and described their use in two kinds of settings. One is the transactional work setting where who is to do what is clearly defined and

a statement of need by a superior implies an obligation on the part of the subordinate. An example is a doctor telling a nurse: "I'll need a routine culture and a specimen." The second setting is in the home, where solicitude on the part of the hearer can be assumed, as in: "I need a spoon, Mommy."

In the library data, when the patron is establishing what it is he has come into the library for, the American often expresses himself with a need statement such as in US-3. Following Ervin-Tripp, this would designate the patron as the superior with an implied obligation of the "subordinate" to perform the task. This would suggest that the patron views the librarian as someone hired to satisfy his wants and that it is the right of the patron to express those wants and the duty of the librarian to satisfy them.

Another aspect of the phrase "I need" is that it implies that this is a real need that has been imposed upon the patron. The need is expressed as though someone is forcing the patron to get a card and the librarian is given very little room to not fulfill the desire (unless P does not have the necessary identification).

On the other hand, the GB patron establishes what it is he wants in a less threatening manner. In most cases, he states his desire with the words "I'd like." Though this is still conventional indirectness, it is of a less threatening nature than "I need." It expresses a personal wish

and gives the librarian seemingly more of an option of satisfying the wish though still the only reason not to satisfy the wish would be if P did not have the sufficient identification. In both cases, it is quite clear as to P's desires but in the second case, P does not impose as heavily on L.

There is not the degree of repetition of forms in the H data that there is in the GB and US data, so forms cannot be as conventiently compared. The common forms of indirectness in the H data are to question abilities:

H-1) A Can you pass the salad?

or to question the state of affairs:

H-2) C Do you have any salt and pepper?

An interesting indirect speech act in the H data is a question that can be recognized as a roundabout way of complaining about a state of affairs and requesting hopefully that someone might be able to change the situation.

H-3) (one-year-old child is screaming for no obvious reason)

R Boy, that kid gets away with murder. Can you imagine a five-year-old screaming like that?

The fact that there is less use of conventional indirectness in the H data may be due to several factors. One is the expected willingness of the H members to be direct with one another because they share common ground. Another factor may have to do with the task at hand. The library, by its very nature, calls for many requests and infringements

on one's actions, while at the dinner table there are not as many occasions to make these infringements.

While the H data shares with the GB and US data the use of indirect requests stated as questions or statements, the use of imperatives occurs only in the H data.

H-4) T Come here.

H-5) T Put it right here.

The imperatives use no features of politeness, being very direct, on-record utterances.

Indirect speech acts often include the use of other features marking politeness, especially the use of "please." This marker is used more in GB than in US or H.

Table 14

"please"

GB	US	H
28%(11)	7%(3)	18%(2)

An interesting use of "please" occurred in the GB data for which there was not a similar event to compare with in the US data as I did not have to ask permission of the US patrons to record their conversations. On a few occasions in England, upon being asked if he would mind being recorded for an American linguistics study, the patron replied with: "Please yourself." It seemed obvious from the tone of voice and facial expressions that the patron was not too happy

with the idea but did not feel he could say no. The expression seemed to say: "To record me is infringing on my freedom of action but if it is worth it to you to threaten my face in this way, then go ahead." Upon questioning some Englishmen outside this situation, the feeling was expressed that indeed the person fully expected me to go ahead and record but that he really did not like the idea. Thus, "please" can mean "please don't" as well as "please do."

The use of conventional indirectness in each setting is seen in the next table:

Table 15

Conventional indirectness

GB	US	H
54%(40)	53%(41)	58%(11)

2) Hedge. This second major category under NP is as difficult and confusing to cope with as conventional indirectness. Hedges include expressions such as "for sure," "really," "exactly," and "absolutely," all of which are discussed under both PP and NP strategies. The motivation behind using PP hedges is to avoid disagreement by hedging one's own opinion. Under NP, the motivation for the use of hedges is to question any assumptions that H is capable of or willing to do a particular act predicted of him.

The use of this strategy is based on the argument that "ordinary communicative intentions are often potential

threats to cooperative interaction" (B & L, p. 150). For example, to ask H to do something assumes that H is willing and able to do it and has not already done it; to promise something to H admits that it has not yet been done and assumes that H wants it done. Hedging these assumptions is a way of lessening the inherent threat.

Hedging can be accomplished in an infinite number of semantic forms and is not necessarily restricted to NP or PP motivations. For example, one may hedge to avoid getting into trouble:

> Mother: Johnny, why is Billy crying?
> Johnny: (who has just hit Billy) I don't know, I mean, well, he was just sitting there and I think he just started crying, just like that.

Under the strategy of hedging, B & L include examples of adverbial particles that weaken the proposition ("Just let us see it"), strengthen the proposition ("You mean you are <u>really</u> leaving?"), soften farewells ("OK, good-bye"), and many other particles; adverbial-clause hedges ("in fact," "in a way," "if you can," "if you want" and others); and hedges addressed to Grice's maxims--Quality ("I think," "to the best of my recollection"), Quantity ("more or less," "give or take a few," "so to speak"); Relevance (topic changes, "I might mention at this point," "by the way"), and Manner ("if you see what I mean," "to put it more clearly").

An example of an utterance that begins as a hedge, then changes is the following utterance. L has suggested that P look at some books. P declines with:

GB-4) P Well, I'll get him to come look at these, I think it's...after all, it's his project.

P begins to hedge as to the reasons why she is rejecting L's suggestion ("I think it's"), changes her mind and states the reason very matter-of-factly ("after all, it's his project").

An example of an utterance that contains a lot of hedging is:

GB-5) P Two tickets to the Saturday afternoon club, please.
L Um, we're not too sure whether it's going to take place, we've only so far got two children coming.

This utterance obviously has more than one motivation governing it. P has optimistically stated her wants. L is not sure she can satisfy them but does not directly say so. The expressions of "not too sure" and "only so far" hedge about the fact that she does not really know and cannot commit herself for sure either way.

Hedging appears to manifest itself in both PP and NP and for a variety of motivations. Without directly asking someone why he is hedging (and he likely would not know what you were talking about), one cannot unequivocally determine the motivations.

Hedges seem to be a part of many of the strategies. For example, NP 3--Be pessimistic--hedges in the utterance:

"I don't suppose there'd be any possibility of you letting me borrow that, would there?"

B & L point out that NP 2 (Hedge) and NP 3 (Be pessimistic) underlie the schema for the construction of polite indirect speech acts. It seems that rather than each strategy being used only in and of itself, many strategies can be at work at the same time in an utterance. This is seen again in NP 4--Minimize the imposition--which is basically a hedge on the degree of threat in an act:

"I just dropped by for a minute to ask you..."

By hedging on how long the interruption is going to be, one is attempting to minimize the imposition of taking up some of H's time. This type of hedge has a different motivation than NP 2, where one hedges to avoid assuming or presuming what H is willing or able to do. In this respect, one must pay a particular amount of attention to the motivation behind the use of a particular strategy and presume that more than one strategy may be at work.

For this reason, I do not assume 100% reliability in my classification and would accept that others might classify somewhat differently. I do not believe, however, that this greatly lessens the validity of the study, for the variations are within a selection of PP or NP strategies, not across PP and NP except for hedging, and if one classifies all hedges of opinion only under PP and the rest under NP, this problem is accommodated.

In classifying NP 2, I included those hedges not clearly accounted for in other categories and those directly in line with the examples given by B & L. For example, the following have been classified under this strategy:

US-4) L Wait a minute.

US-5) P OK, now, I have a problem here.

GB-6) L Well, they can choose, really.

The use of NP hedging is distributed as follows:

Table 16

Hedging

GB	US	H
23%(17)	13%(10)	21%(4)

3) Apologize. By apologizing, S indicates reluctance to impose on H and his freedom of action. One method of apologizing is to beg forgiveness. This is the most common realization in the data:

GB-7) P Sorry.

This expression is used in three out of the four occurrences of this strategy in the GB data. The one example of this strategy in the US data and the remaining GB example apologize by giving a reason for making the infringement:

GB-8) P What's the other one called? I forget now.

US-6) L That's the only way I can accept it.

This strategy was not used at all in the H data.

Table 17

Apologize

GB	US	H
5%(4)	1%(1)	----

4) State the face-threat as a general rule or obligation. In using this strategy, S can put the blame for the infringement or lack of cooperation onto someone or something that is out of S's jurisdiction or control. A common method used in GB and US is to state the limit on the number of books that can be checked out as a limit set by the library, so as to put the blame on the library if P finds this limit unsatisfactory.

GB-9) L You're allowed up to six books.

US-7) L As a courtesy, the library will allow you to check out one item today.

This strategy was not used to any great extent in any of the situations.

Table 18

State face-threat as rule

GB	US	H
7%(5)	10%(8)	5%(1)

5) Minimize the imposition of the act. Minimizing the imposition of the act minimizes the face-threat of the act, which indirectly pays deference to H. A common expression of the strategy is seen in the next examples:

GB-10) P I just wanted to join the library.

US-8) L I just want to make sure I don't give you all one kind.

H-6) C Can I have just one bite?

The use of the word "just" expresses the literal meaning of "only" or "exactly." It also conveys the conventional implication of "merely," thereby expressing the notion that the imposition is not very great.

With utterances such as the above being the most common expressions of this strategy, distribution is as follows:

Table 19

Minimize the imposition

GB	US	H
4%(3)	14%(11)	16%(3)

Overall, the use of negative politeness strategies breaks down into the following distribution:

Table 20

Distribution of negative politeness strategies across subsections of the corpus

GB	US	H
47%(74)	51%(78)	12%(19)

In all three situations, the strategy used most often was that of conventional indirectness. While the GB and US data are fairly similar in the amount of NP strategies used, the H data reveal a very limited use of NP strategies. The

results from the comparison between home and library data concur with the original hypothesis, while the results from the GB and US comparisons do not correspond with the hypothesis. In the next chapter, possible influences on these results shall be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Contrary to expectations, there is no overwhelmingly greater use of PP by Americans or NP by the British. I find these results a bit disappointing, for when I began the study, I had very strong intuitive feelings that indeed the British are more formal than the Americans and that this formality is reflected in their speech. This belief seemed to be supported by B & L's discussion of ethos. Their model of politeness strategies suggested itself as a very possible factor in the impression of the British as stiff and formal; of the Americans as easy-going and informal. As I talked with people in England, they expressed the feeling that Americans were more informal than they were.

By the end of my visit in the summer of 1979, relatives expressed the feeling that I was beginning to sound quite British. As I examined reasons why they might feel this, I looked at my speech and how it had changed. Among the changes I had made consciously and unconsciously were: a slowing down of the rate of speed at which I talked; distinctly speaking the ends of words, such as "I don't know" rather than "I dunno" and "When are we going to go?" instead of "When are we gonna go?"; adopting much of the intonation of British speech; and adopting words and phrases such as

"have you got..." rather than "do you have..." and "posting a letter" instead of "mailing a letter." To a certain extent, I even altered my accent, though I was consciously hesitant to do much of this for fear that people would interpret this as ridicule.

In terms of politeness, I found myself selecting an indirect way of speaking, such as "would you mind..." rather than "do you want..." or "I'd rather not..." instead of "I don't want to." Unfortunately, I do not have detailed recordings of myself in various situations and over the course of the summer to see how my speech changed. But I certainly left at the end of the summer feeling that the British and the Americans do not speak the same.

While tape recording in England and the US, I also had the feeling that there were differences in the conversations in each library and thought these differences could be explained in terms of PP and NP. Not being able to show to any significant degree that this is so, I have asked myself what else in the conversations might have led me to the feeling that there were distinct differences in the conversations in each country.

One cannot deny that accent has some effect on the overall impressions. To my American ear, the British accent sounds somewhat distinguished and is associated with the formality of school children in uniforms, Shakespeare, and royalty. While this may have little place in reality, I

believe that it has an effect on the subconscious level of interpretation.

Vocabulary

Looking at vocabulary, there are some distinct and interesting differences in the two countries. Below are listed some of the words used repetitively in the GB library compared with equivalent words used in the US library:

	GB	US
1)	identity identification proof of identity	ID California's driver's license
2)	library ticket	library card
3)	camera	counter
4)	Have you got...	Do you have...
5)	You can have reserve take out You're allowed to borrow...	You can check out... The library will allow you to check out
6)	have them signed...	have one of your parents sign it...
7)	join join up enroll	join need a card

Discussing these examples by number:

1) "Proof of identity" is a more formal expression than the abbreviation "ID."
2) To the American ear "ticket" may sound strange while "card" may sound strange to the British ear. Neither appears to be more formal or informal in terms of themselves.

3) This is an example of the use of different words for the same setup. In GB, location is indicated by reference to the camera that checked the books; in US, the location is indicated by referring to the counter on which this camera is located. I could never figure out what the British were saying and finally had to ask them what they were talking about.
4) This grammatical difference is referred to often in texts which discuss the difference between British and American English.
5) "Reserve" seems a more formal expression than "check out." "Take out" seems very similar to "check out."
6) Research in the use of the passive in each situation might yield some relevant results.
7) Speakers in GB never said "I need a card"; it was always a statement of desire such as "I would like to join the library."

The differences in the use of particular nouns, verbs, and grammatical constructions lie not so much in terms of politeness as just in terms of being different. What is normal to the American ear may be unusual to the British ear and vice versa. This is bound to affect, to a certain degree, one's perception of the inherent politeness of an utterance. In other words, even though "proof of identity" sounds more formal than "ID," a Briton is not as likely to associate it with formality as an American is, since its use is very common in GB. For an American librarian to use "proof of identity," the patron might wonder why the librarian is being so formal.

Functions of particular words

A look at the use of small, common words reveals some interesting distributions. The use of the politeness

marker "please" has already been discussed (see p. 50), noting a greater use of the word in GB than in US or H data. The use of the following words has been examined:

Table 21

Small words

	GB	US	H
OK	8	49	4
Yeah	9	22	17
Yes	28	8	2
Thank you	26	13	2
Well	6	3	21
OK	13	4	23

The words "OK," "yeah," and "yes" are on-record utterances. "Yes," however, is more formal than "OK" and "yeah." Though all are on-record, "yes" can be said to be "NP-colored" while "yeah" and "OK" are "PP-colored." For example:

US-1) L Do you still live on East Hatch Road?
P Yeah.

This reply is PP-colored, being less formal than the response "yes." In GB, the librarian uses "yes" not so much as an affirmative response than in the same way that "OK" is used in the US. For example:

GB-1) P I'd like to join the library.
L Yes, do you have any identity on you?

US-2) P I'd like to get a library card.
L OK, do you have a California driver's license?

GB-2) P Can I have a new ticket? I lost mine.
L Yes, do you know where you lost it?

US-3) P I got a card a few weeks ago and I can't find it and I was wondering if I could get a new card.
L OK, do you think your card is lost at home?

These examples are not the only use for "yes" in the GB data, but they do demonstrate one common function of the word--"yes," an NP-colored word, can function in the same way as "OK," a PP-colored word.

Merritt (1978) supports the contention that many words which express an affirmative response reflect varying degrees of formality in context. In addition, she suggests that "OK" has "at least two possible functions: (1) that of signifying approval, acceptance, confirmation and (2) that of providing a bridge, a linking device between two stages or phases of the encounter..." (p. 11).

In the data samples examined in this thesis, "OK" appears to function in one of several ways:

1) In many of the cases, "OK" seems to function as a frame as described in Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) analysis of classroom discourse. They defined a frame as words that indicate boundaries in the lesson. This is also similar to the second function suggested by Merritt. Examples from the data of "OK" used in this way are:

L We don't charge fines on the ones that have the stickers on the front, so these two are OK. OK, now there are fines due on each of these books...so the fine on this one will be a dollar seventy-five. OK, so would you be prepared to pay the fine today?

L Is your mother here with you? (mother nods yes) OK, do you have a library card?
P No.
L OK, would you like to get one for yourself?

2) Pseudo-agreement

L OK, if I could have that now then, please.
P OK, just a minute here.

P I'd like your 1979 film catalog.
L OK, what we have is last year's.

L All you need to do is to declare your current address on the back of your license to make it valid.
P OK, um, do you want a real...how permanent of an address do you want, cuz I'm not going to be at this place that long...

3) Real agreement and an expression of understanding on the part of the speaker.

L Do you want to take one of these with you then? That bus four is the one that you need to pick...to get on.
P OK, does it go this way, too?

L ...if you could come up with the call number and the title, then maybe I could put a hold on them.
P OK.

4) Use of OK to see if H is following the conversation.

L You need to place all library materials on the end of the counter before you step through, which eliminates the alarm from going off, OK?
P OK, thank you.

L ...so just put your books on the end of the counter and the clerk will check them out for you, OK?
P OK.

5) As part of the expression of thanks.

P OK, thank you.
L OK, thank you.

6) As a closing to the conversation.

L OK.
P OK.

L That's all I need then. Thank you.
P OK, bye.

Most uses of "OK" in the US data functioned as in (1), (2), or (3), all PP-colored. In the GB data, "OK" was used most often as a preface to "thank you" and as an expression of real agreement. These are also PP-colored but as seen in Table 1, are not used as often as in the US data.

In the H data, the words "well" and "oh" appear to function in many of the same ways as "OK" functions in the library data. Their use includes:

1) As a frame, indicating boundaries between one topic and the next.

D Mom and I will rent it for you on your twenty-fifth wedding anniversary.
C On our twenty-fifth? OK.
J Sounds like a bargain.
R Well, I thought you should all know the ice cream's getting harder and harder, so just take your time.

2) As justification for saying what follows in terms of what has been said. In other words, one speaker says X, then the next speaker begins with "well" and proceeds to say something relating to and expanding on what the first speaker said.

C ...and they had a bottle of champagne in there that said congratulations.
R Oh, that's nice, how nice.
T Well, I looked through every bedroom first, so, I mean, they must have figured...
J ...that they had to do it right.
A Well, we told them that you were getting married.

3) As a filler and a preface. By prefacing an utterance with "well" or "oh," the speaker is giving others time to realize that he is going to speak. As neither word has any real meaning in the utterance, either one can be spoken amidst a hubbub of noise with no loss of meaning, giving others time to be quiet once they realize the speaker is nominating himself to speak.

Another group of words having an interesting distribution in the data is "thank you" or one of its variants. "Thank you" is basically an NP strategy of admitting the impingement of S on H. By saying thanks, S is verbally acknowledging the infringement on H's freedom of action. The linguistic realization of such an impingement often occurs at the beginning of a turn, for example: "Excuse me for bothering you, but...." However, in the case of "thank you," it often occurs at the end of the entire discourse, serving to reassure H that any infringement has been recognized and acknowledged.

Not all expressions of thanks are expressing gratitude. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) have noted that the linguistic components of terminal exchanges include, as well as "goodbye," expressions such as "OK," "see you," "thank you," and "you're welcome." In this data, "thank you," in addition to its function of expressing gratitude, often functions as a closing to the conversation. As clearly expressed in this example:

L OK, that's all I need then. Thank you.

it is a way of signaling that the interchange has come to

an end. The conversations begin with some particular goal in mind and when this goal is accomplished or reasons are provided as to why it cannot be accomplished, there is no reason to continue the conversation.

Sometimes, however, the initial "thank you" is a pre-closing which the second speaker can accept or reject. An example of acceptance is:

P Thank you.
L OK, thank you.

P assumes that the goals have been accomplished and that the transaction has come to an end. L accepts this appraisal, as demonstrated by his reply.

An example of a rejection of the pre-closing "thank you" is:

P OK, thank you very much.
L Thank you. We'll write you when that comes in then.
P Yes, that's all then? OK, thank you.
L Thank you.

L appears to accept the pre-closing yet the following utterance keeps the conversation open. P acknowledges the utterance, checks to make sure L has nothing more to say and then attempts to close the conversation again. This time, L accepts.

As seen in Table 21, GB uses "thank you" or some variant more often than US or H. A more detailed look at the variations reveals some interesting distributions.

Table 22*

Thank you

	GB	US	H
Thank you very much	23%(6)	----	50%(1)
Thank you	61%(16)	46%(6)	50%(1)
OK, thank you	8%(2)	46%(6)	----
Thanks	----	8%(1)	
Thanks very much	8%(2)	----	----

*Percentages represent the number of times each variation is used out of the total number of variations of "thank you" that occur in each data sample.

The use of "thank you very much" (TYVM) does not occur at all in the US data. Examples from the GB data include:

1) P Can I have the Financial Times, please?
   L Here's Friday's.
   P Thank you very much.

2) P I wanted another twenty-five copies. Is it possible just to give you a pound and then just feed them all through (the Xerox machine) or do I have to get twenty-five pieces?
   L No, that wouldn't work very well. I'll give you the...
   P ...twenty-five pieces?
   L Yeah. (counts out the coins) OK.
   P Thank you very much.

3) P Can I join the record library, please?
   L Yes. (P pays enrollment fee) Thank you very much.

4) P Um, technical college. The next year's evening classes.
   L Not till August.

P They don't come out till August?
L No, we don't have them yet, not till August at the earliest.
P OK, thank you very much.

The use of this formal TYVM does not seem to be influenced by any particular feature of the conversation. In (1), P uses TYVM for a service that is quite simple for L to perform, so its use is not necessarily influenced by the difficulty of the task. In (2), P uses TYVM even though he does not get the cooperation that he has asked for, so its use does not necessarily signify true, grateful indebtedness for some desire fulfilled. In (3), P uses TYVM on receipt of money. In other instances in which L receives money, "thanks" or "thank you" is often used, so receipt of money does not necessarily call for the use of TYVM. Finally, in (4), the conversation begins in a very informal manner, with incomplete sentences, assumed understanding, and an unfulfilled request, yet P ends with TYVM.

The use of TYVM may possibly be attributed to the idiosyncracy of particular speakers who consistently use TYVM in any situation. It is relevant to note, though, if its use is idiosyncratic, that it occurs more often in the GB data than in the US or H data.

The expression "thank you" while more formal than "thanks" is less formal than TYVM. It is used more often in GB than in US and is the most common variation used within the GB data. This is consistent with the view

of the library situation being neither completely formal or informal.

The use of "OK" in conjunction with "thank you" has the effect of informalizing the formality of "thank you." This technique is used slightly more often in the US data than in the GB data.

"Thanks," the least formal expression, is used only once and this is in the US data.

In the home data, the two occurrences of "thank you" or a variation are said by the same person:

J Here, save you waiting (gives glass of water).
C Oh, thank you, John.

J (offers corn)
C No, I don't want any, thank you very much, no. I don't like corn.

On both occasions, the use of "thank you" is in response to an offer on the part of the first person. The use of the formal TYVM emphasizes the fact that what is being offered is not desired. There are many other occasions in the data where offers are made, but no expressions of thanks are given.

From this discussion, one sees that the more formal words of "yes" and "thank you" are used more often in GB while the more informal words of "yeah" and "OK" are used more often in the US. The H data has the greatest use of the words "well" and "oh," often used in the same way as "yeah" and "OK." It was noted that NP-colored "yes" in

GB often performs the same functions as PP-colored "yeah" and "OK" do in the US data. Also, "OK" in the US data often serves the functions that "thank you" perform in the GB data. Finally, the NP feature of "thank you" is used more often in GB than in US or H. The distinct differences in the use of these words strongly suggest their influence on one's perception of the formality or informality in each country and setting.

Difficulties in the application of Brown and Levinson's taxonomy

Brown and Levinson's taxonomy is an attempt to account for linguistic similarities in three diverse languages, attributing the similarites to the universal need of interactants to be polite in order to accomplish their goals without damaging anyone's face. The taxonomy attempts to provide evidence for the motives underlying these similarites. B & L have taken linguistic data and formulated a model based on their data. Taking the opposite approach, I have examined data as it fits into their model.

One problem I encountered in attempting to do this analysis was determining exactly what linguistic data B & L intended to be included under any particular strategy. One reason for this difficulty is that some strategies are only briefly described, giving no linguistic examples. For instance,

positive politeness strategy 15* says "Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)" (p. 134), and briefly expands on this in two sentences. This strategy appears to be a catch-all for those utterances that seem to be representative of PP but do not clearly fit into any of the other categories. This lack of detail is also present in the description of PP 10 and to a lesser degree in some of the other strategies.

The discussion of negative politeness strategies is far more detailed, the strategies seemingly more difficult to explain and demonstrate than the positive politeness strategies. B & L devote 28 pages to the discussion of the fifteen strategies of PP and 82 pages to the discussion of the ten strategies of NP, with over half those pages dealing just with NP 1 and NP 2. The discussion of these two strategies, by their very explicitness, create difficulties in the analysis, for the more examples given, the more overlap with examples already mentioned in other strategies. This overlap is most obvious in the use of hedges, described under PP 6 and NP 2.

Hedging as described under PP is used for the purpose of avoiding disagreement and primarily involves hedging one's opinion. As an NP strategy, hedging is an attempt to modify the threat of the speech act by not assuming that H is

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*PP strategies are numbered 1-15; NP strategies are numbered 1-10. See Appendix A for further clarification.

willing to do the act suggested. While B & L admit that "there may be many different motivations for the choice of a linguistic means of expression" (p. 157), they fail to clearly define how one determines which hedges are motivated by the desire to be positively polite and which by the need to be negatively polite.

Another problem encountered in using this model is that many turns contain elements of both PP and NP. The model suggests that if the situation is one of extreme formality and there is a great social distance and difference in power between S and H, one will use a great number of NP strategies. The same holds true for an extremely informal situation and the use of PP.

Research by Brunak and Scarcella (1979) has shown that in role-play situations native speakers of English use more NP with the boss than with the subordinate and more PP with the subordinate than with the boss. Moving along a scale of greater distance and power between S and H, one would expect to find a greater use of exclusively NP, particularly the greater the imposition of the face-threatening act. Moving along the scale in the other direction would result in a greater use of PP.

The library situation does not seem to clearly call for extreme formality or informality, but allows for a vacillation between PP and NP. An example of this vacillation

is seen in the next example:

P Can I have a library card, please, luv?

The utterance "Can I have a library card" is a conventionally indirect way of making a request (NP). The use of "please" intensifies the negative politeness. However, the use of "luv" is a PP strategy of using terms of endearment to express membership within a group, establishing familiarity and solidarity. Clearly this utterance is not completely PP or NP.

B & L suggest that such a mixture of strategies results in a hybrid strategy in-between PP and NP. However, they argue that even if NP techniques are applied to a basically PP utterance, the utterance is still PP. The same holds true in reverse. Thus, the above example is seen as an NP strategy even though it makes use of a PP technique.

There is far less vacillation of this nature in the home situation, which appears to clearly be informal, resulting in obvious and striking differences in strategy use when compared with the library situation.

In addition to the problem of an utterance containing elements of both PP and NP, there is the problem of utterances satisfying both PP and NP motivations within the same utterance. For example:

P Yeah, she wants a new card.

While this is an indirect request for a library card (NP 1), it is also a strategy of expressing a want optimistically,

assuming that H will want S's wants for S (PP 11). However, comparing:

P Yeah, she wants a new card.

with:

P P I'd like to renew my library card, please.

one sees that the second is more formally expressed than the first. B & L suggest that the more effort one puts out in trying to preserve face, the more one is viewed as being polite. Thus, the second example can be seen as more polite than the first, even though both are asking for the same thing. Both are indirect requests (as opposed to "Give me a library card.") but one is spoken in an NP context and the other in a PP context. This is a real confusion in the examination of NP 1, for while B & L classify this strategy of conventional indirectness under negative politeness, they give examples that they say are so presumptuous that they would only occur in a positive politeness context. Problems encountered in applying this strategy to the analysis have been discussed in Chapter III.

Based on my experiences in using B & L's model for this analysis, I have concluded that it would be helpful to adapt the model to render it more appropriate for a linguistic study. As more analyses of this type are undertaken, it seems reasonable to expect that adaptations can be made to account for some of the vagueness and overlap of strategies existing in the model's present state. The

more refined the model becomes for linguistic purposes, the more precise and dependable analyses will be and many turns that I was unable to classify could possibly be accounted for, which may have influenced the results of the analysis. Because the differences between the library and home data comparisons are so distinct, the imprecision present in the model as it now stands is not as influential on the results of the analysis as in the GB-US comparison, where differences are more subtle and covert.

Other factors influencing the analysis

Another factor influencing this investigation is the choice of setting. The interaction at the information desk of a library is generally very ritualistic. This ritual has proved useful for making cross-cultural comparisons of very similar speech acts. However, different settings establish different rituals based on the participants' interpretations of the setting. Comparisons between several settings would help to determine the influence of setting on the results.

It is possible that patrons in one library view the setting as more threatening than patrons in the other library do, and therefore, use more NP strategies than expected when comparing two similar settings. It is my contention, however, that the library setting is perceived in basically the same way in both countries. In neither

country were PP or NP strategies exclusively used, which suggests that the setting lies somewhere in-between extreme formality or informality. It would be useful, though, to establish just how participants do perceive the setting.

Also, I assumed that librarians in both countries enjoyed the same status in the eyes of the patrons. In both libraries, the librarians were treated respectfully, patrons appeared to regard the librarians as doing their best to be helpful, and assumed that they were knowledgeable in their field. Whenever a patron had a complaint, he stated it matter-of-factly, not angrily or critically. The librarians appeared to enjoy their job and their co-workers. The atmosphere in both libraries was relaxed, the librarians interested in their patrons' needs, and interested in the wordl around them, as evidenced by the variety of topics discussed in their conversations with the patrons.

Finally, this investigation is not a clear, precise study in as much as it is dealing with human nature and human variability, aspects that do not lend themselves to neat pigeon-holing. Therefore, it is my opinion that in all of the analyses, a joint effort on the part of two or more researchers could eliminate some of the subjective judgements that are bound to occur.

Summary and conclusions

The hypothesis that in the particular setting of the libraries, the British would use more negative politeness strategies in their speech than the Americans and that the Americans would use more positive politeness strategies than the British was not supported by this research.

It has been suggested that some of the differences perceived in the speech of the British compared with the speech of the Americans are due to variations in the use of words such as "please," "thank you," "OK," and "yes." Vocabulary differences may also play a role. Finally, difficulties encountered in the use of the model may have influenced the results. It is hoped that with further refinement and adaptation, the model will account for some of the more subtle variations in the use of politeness strategies that this analysis was able to account for.

The hypothesis that analysis of the home data would reveal a greater use of positive politeness strategies than those used in the library has been supported. The three variables of social distance, social power, and the degree of imposition of the speech act appear to be assessed at a much lower level of threat in the home than in the library. To examine greater subtleties of the comparison, it might prove useful to compare similar situations, for example, the family at meal time compared with strangers or business

associates at a meal, allowing for more comparisons of similar speech events.

In terms of which variety of English--British or American--a non-native speaker is learning, it appears that the student can be taught either one and function equally well in situations using the variety not taught. However, teaching politeness involves more than merely teaching "please" and "thank you." The teacher may want to discuss the choices of strategies that exist in the culture and what the selection of different styles and words connotes. The student should be made aware of the influence of social distance, power, and degree of imposition of the speech act on his linguistic output. He must learn how to adjust his speech in English based on his evaluation of these three variables.

This study, though limited in scope, has shown that B & L's model promises to be a useful taxonomy for analysis and gives the teacher a framework in which to realize and discuss differences between cultures and languages in terms of politeness and its effect on linguistic outputs. This knowledge will give the teacher a better understanding of the difficulties a student may encounter in the transfer of strategies from his native to the target language. Further evaluations of native speakers' ability and need to vary language should provide the teacher with a better discription of the linguistic ability of the native speaker, knowledge to be conveyed to the non-native speaker.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES*

Positive-politeness strategies

1) Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goals)

2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
   Exaggerated intonation, stress
      "What a fantastic garden."
      "How absolutely marvelous."
   Use of words like "for sure," "really," "exactly"

3) Intensify interest to H
   Intensify interest of S's contribution to the conversation
   Use of "vivid" present, pulling H into middle of discourse
   Use of directly quoted speech
   Use of tag questions that draw H into conversation--
      "You know" "See what I mean?", "isn't it?"
   Exaggerate facts, overstate
      "There were a million people in the Coop tonight."
      "I'll be done in one second."

4) Use in-group identity markers
   Address form--"mate," "luv," "buddy"
   In-group language or dialect
   Jargon or slang
   Contractions and ellipses--reliance on shared knowledge

5) Seek agreement
   Safe topics--look for aspects on which it is possible to agree
   Repetition--repeat part of what S says, demonstrating one has heard correctly

6) Avoid disagreement
   Token agreement--"yes, but..."
   Pseudo-agreement--use of "then," "so"

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*Taken from P. Brown and S. Levinson, "Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena."

"I'll be seeing you then."
White lies
Hedging opinion--S is vague about own opinion so as not to disagree
Use of extreme words--"marvelous," "fantastic"
Assume degree of common ground between S and H, to enable H to interpret S--"sort of," "in a way"

7) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
Gossip, small talk
Point-of-view operation
S speaks as if central person were the hearer
"Yes, dear, it hurts terribly, I know."
S speaks as if coding time were located in a past event
"John says do you want to come?"
S speaks as if central place were the H's location
"Here is a man I can trust" vs. "There is..."
Presupposition manipulations
S speaks as if something is mutually assumed
Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes
"Don't you think it's marvelous?"
Presuppose sharing of same values, familiarity in S-H relationship

8) Joke
"OK if I tackle those cookies now?"

9) Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants
"Look, I know you want the car back by 5:00, so shouldn't I go to town now?" (request)

10) Offer, promise
Claim that whatever H wants, S wants for him and will help to obtain, even if this is a false claim.

11) Be optimistic
S assumes that H wants S's wants for S (or S and H)
"I've come to borrow a cup of flour."
"Look, I'm sure you won't mind if..."
Minimize the size of face-threat, implying that it's nothing to ask (or offer)
"a little," "a bit," "for a sec"

12) Include both S and H in the activity
Inclusive "we" when S really means "you" or "me"
"let's"
"Give us a break" (i.e. 'me')

13) Give or ask for reasons
S gives reason why he wants what he wants as a way of including H in activity
"Why don't I help you with that suitcase?"
"Why didn't you do the dishes?!"

14) Assume or assert reciprocity
"I'll do X for you if you'll do Y for me."

15) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

Negative-politeness strategies

1) Be conventionally indirect
Opposing tensions--desire to give H an 'out' by being indirect and the desire to go on record. So use conventional indirectness, which encodes the clash of wants, partially achieving them both.
Indirectness which in context cannot be defended as ambiguous
Indirect speech acts function as 'hedge' on illocutionary force

2) Question, hedge--Don't presume or coerce
Particle, word, or phrase that modifies degree of membership
"sort of," "regular," "rather," "quite"
Convey hedged performatives, modifying the force of a speech act
"Won't you open the door?"
To ask someone to do something is to presuppose that they can and are willing to do it, and have not already done it. To hedge these assumptions is a routine way of lessening interactional threats. These are hedges on illocutionary force.
tags--"Do me a favor, will you?"
propositional content--"He really did run that way."
strengtheners--"exactly," "precisely"
other words--"then," "only," "just," "really"
Hedges on Grice's maxims--emphasize or question whether cooperative principle has been met
"I think," "As you know," "By the way"
Hedges directed to politeness strategies
"to be honest," "I hate to have to say this, but..."

3) Be pessimistic
   Give redress to H's negative face by explicitly expressing doubt that the condition for S's speech act obtains
   Use of subjunctive
      "would," "could," "might"
   Use of future tense
   Negative usage
      "I don't suppose there'd be any chance of you..."
      "You don't have X, by chance?"

4) Minimize the imposition, R_x
   Indicate R_x, the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition, is not in itself great, leaving only D and P as possible weighty factors. Indirectly may pay deference.
      "I just want to ask you..."
      "Just a sec."
      "a tiny little bit..."

5) Give deference
   S humbles self; or raises H by paying him positive face, conveying that H has higher status than S.
      Honorifics
      Humbling one's self, capacities, or possessions
         "It's not much but..."
         "I think I must be stupid but..."
      Convey H's wants are more important than S's and thus become S's
         "Just as you like."
      Hesitations

6) Apologize
   Indicates S's reluctance to impinge on H's negative face and therefore partially redresses that impingement
      Admit the impingement
         "I hope this isn't going to bother you too much..."
      Indicate reluctance
         "I hate to bother you but..."
      Give overwhelming reasons
         "I simply can't manage without your help."
      Beg forgiveness
         "Excuse me but..."
         "I'm sorry to bother you but..."

7) Impersonalize S and H
   Phrase as if agent were someone other than S, and address someone other than H
   Avoid the pronouns "I" and "You"
      Leave out "you"
      Passivize
      Replace pronoun with indefinites
      Pluralize

8) State the FTA as a general rule
   Pronoun avoidance
      "Passengers please refrain from..."
   General obligation--S is not imposing, just drawing attention to a general rule
      "We don't sit on tables, we sit on chairs, Johnny."

9) Nominalize
   Increase 'nouniness'
      "It is my pleasure to be able to inform you..."
      vs. "I am pleased to be able to inform you..."

10) Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H
   "I'd be eternally grateful if you would..,"
   "I could easily do it for you."

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